

to undertaker Thomas Rivera for burial after a formal inquest by coroner David Jacobs.⁷³

More shots rang throughout the area as more and more whites and blacks filtered into the Brooklyn area. Among the white onlookers was attorney George Rountree. Having just mediated the safety of blacks at Sprunt's compress, Rountree went to investigate so that if a governmental inquiry took place, he would be prepared to answer questions. Rountree is probably the person responsible for filing the sworn affidavit of William McAllister that was published repeatedly in local and statewide newspapers indicating that a black man was responsible for firing the first shots.⁷⁴ Rountree recalled that he and several others attempted to "quiet the situation and to prevent any further shooting," but

acknowledged that "at this time I had no influence whatever with the rioters" and was pleased that the arrival of the military "quieted the matter down as quickly as possible."⁷⁵

WLI Enter Brooklyn

Once the riot alarm was sounded and authority to act was granted by the governor, Captain James, upon orders of Walker Taylor, mobilized the waiting forces of the WLI to march into the Brooklyn neighborhood. They marched down Market Street to Third, then over to the intersection at Princess where they stopped in front of James Woolvin's funeral parlor at 105 North Third and waited for the Naval Reserves to join their procession. Once the WLI moved again, they marched down Third to Mulberry to Fourth Street to cross into Brooklyn. At the Fourth Street Bridge Captain James halted the group and announced: "[N]ow boys I want to tell you right now I want you all to load and when I give the command to shoot, I want you to shoot to kill." After James' statement, there was a shot fired at the group, but the WLI could not determine who had fired.⁷⁶

J. D. Nutt recalled that after they had marched through the area, by the time his unit returned to the armory, he still had all of his cartridges, not having fired a shot.⁷⁷ Members of the WLI remembered other facets of their marches through town. Jack Metts wrote on November 12, the first day

⁷³ "Minutes of the Association of the WLI," North Carolina Collection; *Wilmington Messenger* November 11, 12, 1898; Edmonds, *Negro and Fusion Politics*, 169; Prather, *We Have Taken a City*, 125, 129.

⁷⁴ The text of William McAllister's affidavit reads: "I, William McAllister, being duly sworn, make the following affidavit: 1. That I am yard master for the Atlantic Coast Line. My duty is to make up trains on the yard of the said company in the city of Wilmington. 2. That at about 11 o'clock this morning I started to go to bed, and my wife called me to the window. I live on North Fourth Street, next to St. Mark's Lutheran church. My wife said: 'Billy, there is going to be trouble.' I jumped up and went to the window and saw a white man remonstrating with a negro with gesticulations. I heard the white man say, 'Go on, go on.' The negro went about ten paces, and then I saw the negro shoot. He pointed a pistol towards the white man and then fired. Immediately I saw blood flow from the said white man's right arm. Then there was another shot fired from the negro assemblage, and then there was firing from the white assemblage, with the result that three negroes fell. The negroes then dispersed. Then the white men proceeded towards Moore's drug store to telephone for assistance. Sworn to before me, this 10th day of November, AD 1898 William McAllister" Notarized by J.H. Boatwright. *News and Observer* (Raleigh), November 11, 1898

⁷⁵ Rountree, "Memorandum."

⁷⁶ "Minutes of the Association of the WLI," North Carolina Collection. The WLI must have stopped in front of Jim Woolvins' funeral parlor at 105 North Third. J.D. Nutt recalled that Woolvins "turned white as a ghost, except for his hair which was still red" when the WLI stopped in front of his establishment.

⁷⁷ "Minutes of the Association of the WLI," North Carolina Collection.